

# Erlík

**Erlík**, **Erlig**, **Erlík Khan**, **Erleg** or **Yerleg** (Turkish: *Erlík Han*; Hungarian mythology equivalent to *Ördög*) is the god of death and Tamag (hell) in Turkic mythology. He is the son of Ülgen, the nephew of Yer Tengri and the grandson of Kayra Han.

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## Features

According to Siberian mythology, Erlík was the first creation of Ülgen/Ulgen, the creator god, but Erlík's pride led to friction between the two, and he was banished to the underworld.

In the myths of the Turkic and Mongolian peoples, Erlík was involved in the creation of humanity.<sup>[1]</sup> He slew the messenger-god, Maidere/Maydere, and is a teacher of sin. He is sometimes represented by a totemic bear.

In Turkic mythology, Erlík was the deity of evil, darkness, lord of the lower world and judge of the dead. He is known as the first of mankind, created by Ülgen. He wants to be equal to Ülgen, but is in a position inferior to him. Then he wanted to make his own land and was sent to the prison at the 9th layer of the earth and became opposed to the upper world, the realm of light.

The evil spirits created by Erlík cause misfortune, sickness and death to mankind. These spirits are imagined as Erlík's assistants. Besides these, his nine sons and daughters help their father in the way of evil. Erlík's daughters especially try to change a shaman's mind while he is attempting to reach Ülgen with their beauties. Erlík gives all kinds of sickness and wants sacrifices from the people. If they do not sacrifice to him, he catches the dead bodies of the people that he killed and takes them away to this lower world and then makes them his slaves. So, especially in the Altays, when sickness appears, people become scared of Erlík and make many animal sacrifices to him.<sup>[1]</sup>

In the prayers of shamans, Erlík is described as a monster, having the face and teeth of a pig combined with a human body. Besides his face, he is an old man with a well-built body, black eyes, eyebrows and mustache.

The dinosaur *Erlikosaurus* is named after him.<sup>[2]</sup>

# Children of Erlik

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Erlik has nine sons, named Karaoğlanlar ("black boys"). They are Karash Khan, Matr Khan, Shingay Khan, Komur Khan, Badish Khan, Yabash Khan, Temir Khan, Uchar Khan, and Kerey Khan. He also has nine daughters, named Karakızlar ("black girls"), their names being unknown.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Karaoghlanlar

They are the sons of Erlik.

1. Karash Han: The god of darkness.
2. Matyr Han: The god of courage and bravery.
3. Shyngay Han: The god of chaos.
4. Komur Han: The god of evil.
5. Badysh Han: The god of disaster.
6. Yabash Han: The god of defeat.
7. Temir Han: The god of iron and mining.
8. Uchar Han: The god of informants.
9. Kerey Han: The god of discord.

## In religions

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Erlik was worshipped in some traditional religions in Siberia and Central Asia, such as by Buryats. As Erlik is seen as the ruler of demons and the underworld, sacrifices are made for him to get rid of diseases or for the sake of people, who will enter the underworld after death.<sup>[4]</sup>

While some scholars believe that Erlik points to some sort of dualism between the divine heaven and the lower earth within Tengrist cosmology, others argue that Ülgan and Erlik are two rulers along side Tengri, representing good and evil respectively.<sup>[5]</sup>

## See also

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|-----------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ <u>Angra Mainyu</u> | ▪ <u>Ördög</u>       |
| ▪ <u>Erlking</u>      | ▪ <u>Satan</u>       |
| ▪ <u>Erlikosaurus</u> | ▪ <u>Set</u>         |
| ▪ <u>Hades</u>        | ▪ <u>Veles</u>       |
| ▪ <u>Iblis</u>        | ▪ <u>Yamāntaka</u>   |
| ▪ <u>King Yama</u>    | ▪ <u>Yanluo Wang</u> |
| ▪ <u>Lucifer</u>      |                      |

## Citations

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2. R. Barsbold və A. Perle, 1980, Acta Palaeontologica Polonica 25(2): səh. 187-195

3. *Türk Söylence Sözlüğü (Turkish Mythological Dictionary)*, Deniz Karakurt, (OTRS: CC BY-SA 3.0)
4. Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer *Shamanism: Soviet Studies of Traditional Religion in Siberia and Central Asia: Soviet Studies of Traditional Religion in Siberia and Central Asia* Routledge, 22.07.2016 ISBN 9781315487243 p. 63
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